Using ICS-213 Form

The General Message (ICS 213) is used to record incoming messages that cannot be orally transmitted to the intended recipients. Otherwise use voice tactical methods direct. We are not an accounting service, but rather radio EmComm field operators.

ICS-213 is very simple once you take away element 1 and element 8 (which does not apply to us in the trenches).

1. Incident Name (Optional)

2. To (Name and Position):

3. From (Name and Position):

4. Subject:

5. Date:

6. Time

7. Message:

8. Approved by: Name: Signature: Position/Title:

The bottom line (8) only applies if one is stationed inside an IC Communications Center where there is a Communications Manager It does not apply to radio ops in the field and trenches.

To reiterate, only 6 lines are essential (2-7) for field operations. TO, FROM, SUBJECT, DATE, TIME, and Message Text.

See: HYPERLINK "https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1922-25045-0396/ics_213.txt" https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1922-25045-0396/ics_213.txt

Example: To: Jan Smythe   Captain Salvation Army

From: George Bhush   Captain US Air Force Reserve

Subject: Cold Coffee July 21 0600

Text:

Out of coffee X Please advise

End of message, No More

Another example:

TO: John Jones Incident Commander

From: Jane Doe   EC8 IC   July 23   1231

Gas main rupture Moeser and Ashbury X Evacuation in progress

End, no more

One cannot get more simple than that; but is it adequate in terms of traceability, accuracy, efficiency, and content? No, that's why we add an additional field, the ARES/ARRL header.

The ARES header allows for quick tracing and servicing by referring to the message number and station of origin, location, and date/time of origin; because the ICS-213 lacks location fields. Let it be said that personnel change over a 24 hour period and messages sent to individuals may not be relevant over even a short time period.

In addition to the above header information, the ARES header adds two more critical fields, a word check and a precedence. Emergency Traffic is to be handled before priority traffic, and Priority traffic is to be handles before Welfare traffic; while Routine traffic is to handled last if at all. Please consult the KaroEcho Field Resource Handbook for definitions of these four designations.

Word count or check is an accuracy check, much like the cyclic redundancy check (CRC) guaranteeing the integrity of files. It simply is a count of the total amount of words in a message including punctuation minus the signature (the signature is not counted in the word count. Getting the word count correct is a science and takes practice. Often it is just left blank when dealing with those who do not know how to count correctly. However, if it is given, then the receive station should count the words. If there is a discrepancy, then send Check 25 corrected to Check 26. The sending station will recount. If there is still disagreement then we QTB (send the first letter or numeral in each letter, mixed group, initials, or figures group while checking). Numbers and words are often dropped when conditions are marginally poor, noisy, or stressful. A missing word can drastically alter the

meaning of the message, so please learn how to use this feature of the ARES header. Newcomers just leave it be until you gain more practice.

We will have practice sessions on word check in the future.